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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE 4577-4578  
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 9895-9896  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 9280-9281  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 9178-9179  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2596-2597  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 3229-3230  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 4966-4967  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5160-5161

UNCLAS STATE 021540

SENSITIVE

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDING SENSITIVE CAPTION)

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL AF PK

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO DUTCH POINTS ON MARCH 31 AFGHANISTAN CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 21115

¶1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 5.

¶2. (SBU) On March 6, the Political Counselor at the Embassy of The Netherlands in Washington conveyed an informal Dutch response to the U.S. non-paper outlining our concept for a Ministerial conference on Afghanistan. The Dutch envision the conference as laying the foundation for a new Afghanistan Compact once the current Compact expires in 2010. They propose the format consist of UN and Dutch co-chairs, with the UNSYG formulating the statement of conclusions. For the formulation of the statement of conclusions, they have suggested preparations be coordinated at UN Headquarters in New York, assisted by a Friends of the Chair Group, which would include The Netherlands. They also have requested the Friends group follow the format of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), a group based in Kabul. In response to our suggestion that Pakistan be incorporated formally into the agenda, the Dutch indicated they would prefer to focus on Afghanistan while acknowledging the regional context of the broader situation.

¶3. (SBU) While we agree with most elements of the Dutch approach, we are concerned the process outlined by The Netherlands for preparation of the Chairman's statement would detract from UN Special Representative Kai Eide's role as Chairman of the proposed conference and his broader position as a key leader in the international community for Afghanistan. In addition, we believe the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board is not appropriate for this task.

¶4. (SBU) We also believe it is crucial to address the linkages between the common issues faced by both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and will continue encouraging their formal inclusion in the agenda.

¶5. (SBU) Action Request: Department requests that Charge deliver the following points to the appropriate high-level officials of the Government of The Netherlands:

--Thank you for your prompt and considered reply to our proposal for a Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan on March 31, hosted by The Netherlands.

--We wholeheartedly concur with your characterization of the nature of the meeting, and with the proposed co-chairmanship by the United Nations and the Government of The Netherlands.

--As stated in our non-paper, we believe the key deliverable of the conference will be a chairman's statement issued under SRSG for Afghanistan Kai Eide's name.

--Such a statement would further our shared goal of reinforcing SRSG Eide's position as an international leader for issues on Afghanistan.

--To that end, we believe that preparation of the chair's conclusions should be undertaken by SRSG Eide in Kabul rather than by UN Headquarters working with a Friends of the Chair group in New York. Having said that, SRSG Eide will travel to New York this month.

--SRSG Eide will consult all stakeholders, especially your government as co-chair, in the drafting process. This process worked well for the Paris International Conference in Support of Afghanistan in June 2008, and we believe it is the best model for the March 31 conference.

--We also ask that you reconsider our request to broaden the agenda of the meeting to encompass Pakistan as well as Afghanistan.

--As you are aware, the U.S. government is in the final stages of completing a strategic policy review for Afghanistan and Pakistan, something for which we received substantial input from the international community.

--This review process has made it abundantly clear that the problems faced by Afghanistan and Pakistan spring from a common source: violent extremism, sustained by narcotrafficking, economic hardship, and poor governance.

--Furthermore, efforts to achieve our goal of a stable, peaceful Afghanistan could be significantly undercut by a destabilized Pakistan.

--These common problems require a common solution, and broadening the agenda of the conference to include Pakistan would demonstrate renewed impetus to bring sustainable long-term stability to the region.

--As such, we think it critical that both the framework of the conference and the resulting Chairman's Statement reflect a decision to address these problems in an integrated manner.

--Given his deep experience and strong understanding of Afghanistan and his current role with Pakistan, we would expect former SRSG for Afghanistan Jean Arnault to play a role in the conference as it moves forward as well.

--We look forward to supporting your work as host of this conference, and appreciate your consideration of our proposal.  
CLINTON